

# THE CATHOLIC MIND

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## Reprisals

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**D**URING the months immediately preceding the outbreak of war the principles of what constituted a just war were widely discussed amongst Catholics in this country, and some of them held the belief that in modern times the conditions for a just war could never be verified. The declaration of the Hierarchy, communicated to the Catholic press, September 15, 1939, was a most timely piece of guidance:

We, the Catholic Hierarchy of England and Wales, wish to urge upon all the Faithful, at this time of national trial and endeavor, the duty of loyal obedience to His Majesty the King, and of willing cooperation in every form of national service. We have a profound conviction of the justice of our cause. Our nation in this conflict stands for freedom and for the liberty of the individual and the State.

This statement of the Bishops gave the *quietus* to the pacifism of a small but by no means negligible group of Catholic writers, and it reflected the convictions of English Catholics as a body.

To have a *just cause* in waging war is the most necessary of the conditions, and it is one which may

usually be taken for granted by members of the armed forces. But there is required, in addition, during the course of operations, the use of means which are just, failing which the waging of war is wrong, no matter how right the cause may be; and this is a matter which does obviously come within the cognizance of the fighting men. Amongst these means reprisals occupy a prominent place in the present war. This article is meant as a contribution to clarifying our ideas on the subject, and although the writer's trade of teaching moral theology inclines him to regard as lawful whatever is not clearly forbidden by the moral law, he claims no authority for the conclusions reached. If the problem ever becomes so acute and pressing as to disturb the conscience of any considerable number of the Faithful, we may expect, no doubt, some further guidance from the Hierarchy.

#### LIMITATIONS

Reprisals, as defined by the Institute of International Law at Paris in 1934, are measures of constraint, disregarding the Law of Nations, taken by a State which has suffered from the unlawful acts of another State, the purpose being to compel the latter to respect the law by inflicting damage upon it. As so defined reprisals are not restricted to the activities of war, nor need they necessarily imply the use of lethal weapons, but they always imply an intentional departure from a previously agreed convention. When one belligerent, for example, uses gas in defiance of an established convention, the other belligerent, as a reprisal, also uses gas, or adopts some other weapon which is normally forbidden, precisely in order to bring home to the enemy that it is not worth his while to break the rules. An increased reciprocal rigor or determination in the course of the war, provided the normal rules of warfare are observed, is quite wrongly described as reprisals.

There are many people who think that, no matter what is done in the course of a war as reprisals, the only moral principle involved is the obligation of keeping one's word, a contractual obligation which ceases to bind one party immediately it is violated by the other. *Fas est ab hoste doceri*. And, indeed, if the ultimate ethical distinction between good and evil is to be sought in human convention and contract (an antiquated theory which nowadays claims a few adherents) there is nothing more to be said on the subject. There will be absolutely no limit to what may be done as reprisals, each side outdoing the other in acts of savage cruelty and barbarity. We cannot, in this place, examine the difference between *malum quia prohibitum* and *prohibitum quia malum*, but it will be found, we imagine, that practically everyone holds that the line must be drawn somewhere, be it only in the name of human pity or what is due to the dignity of the human body, and that a civilized man must and will refrain from certain savageries, even though an uncivilized enemy may indulge in them, and even though it can be demonstrated that their adoption will be not only an effective reprisal but a sure means of victory.

Reprisals are, so to speak, a war within a war, and are no more odious or immoral than is war itself. But they are subject to the same conditions as war, including the moral obligation not to employ any method which is forbidden by the law of God; and just as a war will cease when the parties achieve their aims or reach an agreement, so also should reprisals cease—the war, if necessary, continuing its course—once their purpose has been attained or an *interim* agreement reached. It was on these principles that Benedict XV intervened in the last war to secure from the belligerents that no restrictive measures should be applied against prisoners of war, as reprisals, until an exchange of views had taken place.

## DIVINE LAW

In international agreements, as in the civil laws of any country, there will be found some articles which derive their force entirely from the free consent of the parties to the convention: for example, an undertaking not to use gas in warfare. Other articles, however, are also agreed upon which derive their force from a higher law, and which are binding upon all men antecedently to any convention amongst them, exactly as the prohibition of theft binds all men quite apart from its inclusion in the civil code. It may, indeed, be convenient to record explicitly in writing the intention of the parties to observe this higher law, but its binding force is not to be traced merely to a contractual obligation. It is part of that immutable and indispensable law which the Creator has placed upon human beings.

The murder of the innocent is forbidden by divine law, and the usual presentation of the argument against bombing civilians assumes as self-evident that it is always murder of the innocent. If this is so, the conclusion is immediate and manifest: it may never be resorted to as an act of reprisal no matter what the provocation. One may be wholly in agreement with this conclusion, but it would vastly simplify the problem if the premises were, as a matter of fact, self-evident. Unhappily, this is far from being the case. For it must be observed, in the first place, that in this context the word "innocent" has a rather specialized meaning, a legacy from certain legal texts of the Middle Ages which distinguish between "nocentes" and "innocentes" in the sense of combatants and non-combatants, in order to forbid during the course of a war the slaughter of the latter. Totalitarian warfare has made this distinction much less clearly defined in modern times, when nearly the whole civil population is drawn into a nation's war effort in manufacturing

engines and munitions of war, or in contributing more or less directly to the new kind of warfare which is called "economic." It is clearly inadmissible to hold that a person manufacturing bombs is a non-combatant, and a clerk in the R.A.S.C. a combatant. Moreover, in Germany, we are told, the whole civil population has been for years organized and marshaled, women and children as well as men, with a view to taking an active and efficient part in the nation's war effort. In England the Home Guard is composed of men who, except for a few hours weekly, are engaged in their usual civil occupation; but they do not, we believe, regard themselves as non-combatants when not in uniform.<sup>1</sup>

### THE CIVIL POPULATION

When, therefore, our rulers rightly encourage the civil population to share as cheerfully and stoically as possible the dangers which the armed forces of the country are facing, and to employ all their resources for the prosecution of the war, their point would seem to be that civilians should be as ready as the armed forces to vindicate at the risk of life the just cause for which the country is at war.

It should be fairly evident that amongst the civil population of a modern State at war there are at least a considerable number who are as much engaged in the war as the forces in uniform, and that, however much we may deprecate enemy attacks upon them, there is no very good foundation for a blazing moral indignation on the grounds that such attacks are necessarily

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<sup>1</sup> If the word "innocent" is not taken as synonymous with "non-combatant," but in the more usual connotation of "blameless," i. e., not responsible for the inception or continuance of the war, it is still less evident that the civilians of any modern State, particularly a democratic State, are entitled to this description. They elect their government and cannot entirely dissociate themselves from its actions.

murder of the innocent. Two very divergent and opposite beliefs are born of this conclusion. The intelligent pacifist maintains that therefore modern warfare is a *reductio ad absurdum*, a conflict not between armies but between whole populations, a lunacy which can never be brought within the conditions prescribed for a just war; it is his duty and everyone's duty to refuse any kind of war service. At the other extreme is the belief that therefore a modern nation engaged in warfare must methodically and quite ruthlessly do its utmost to destroy the whole enemy population; having once begun, it should make a good job of it, on the lines of Deuteronomy iii, 6, "destroying every city, men and women and children."

The pacifist solution is not acceptable, and least of all to Catholics, because it offers no alternative to an abject and craven submission in the face of a determined hostile attack on our hearths and altars. *Vim vi repellere omnia iura permittunt.*

The second solution is equally unacceptable because it means a reversion to the primitive; for anyone professing the Christian faith it means the disavowal of all the ideas of mercy, pity and love of humanity which that faith engenders; for a Catholic it means the destruction of what remains in the world of a legacy left to it from times when Christendom, in the West at any rate, meant the Catholic Church. People write about the "conditions" for a just war as though these were deducible from unaided reason, almost like a proposition of Euclid. It is not sufficiently recognized that it was the theologians of the Catholic Church who clarified the idea of what is permitted in a just war, and they did so, largely under the influence of ecclesiastical legislation, by clarifying the meaning of war. The notion was only vaguely realized in antiquity, if realized at all, and warfare was conducted on a principle of *jus belli infinitum*, both as regards the persons and the property of all subjects of enemy States.

## COMBATANTS AND NON-COMBATANTS

War was not, is not, and never will be regarded as in itself sinful by the Church; on the contrary, Councils have decreed war against Turks and other enemies of Christendom, not to induce them to embrace the Christian faith, but to compel them to leave Christians alone. What the Church has done is to mitigate the horrors of war by circumscribing its limits, declaring certain categories of people, such as merchants and peasants with their belongings, to be exempt from *direct* attack; from the nature of the case, no person whatever, not even infants and the dying, can be guaranteed immunity from the *indirect* effects of war. These mitigations, being accepted by the people and their rulers, at least in principle, have received the sanction of international law. Under the influences of Christianity war is recognized as a conflict between nations *as such*, not a free fight between all the subjects of one State and all the subjects of another acting as two rival mobs. There can be no doubt that this is the origin of the distinction between "combatants" and "non-combatants" (*nocentes* and *innocentes*), and it is important to recognize that the immunity of the latter rests on a standard which is more vital than that of chivalry, more fundamental than any contractual obligation.

The terms "combatant" and "non-combatant" must now, unfortunately, be supplanted by "military objective" and "non-military objective." The latter should be immune from direct attack for the reasons summarized in the preceding paragraph, and not precisely because certain persons are "innocent" as the word is used when we say that it is always wrong to murder innocent persons. The rule, therefore, that it is morally wrong directly to attack a non-military objective must rigidly be observed by all members of the fighting forces who are not glorying in a reversion to bar-

barism; by all Christians who retain even a flickering spark of Christ's love for humanity; by all Catholics who remain loyal to the guidance of the Church. The wrong is intrinsic, *prohibitum quia malum*, and not merely the violation of some international convention, although its intrinsic wrongness cannot, in numbers of cases, easily be deduced from the natural law forbidding the murder of the innocent. It follows, accordingly, that it cannot be permitted even on the score of reprisals.

### MILITARY OBJECTIVES

But it is, in our view, absolutely essential to allow a very wide latitude in defining what is a military objective in modern warfare. We have had in mind, throughout this discussion, the appalling dilemma confronting a Catholic in the Air Force who is despatched by his command on a bombing expedition. He must obey his superior officer, but he must also know that his duty of obedience to an external command may never lead him to disobey the internal command of his own conscience in a matter which is gravely sinful. It is our opinion that, unless the opposite is manifest, it may be assumed that the position he is ordered directly to attack is a military objective, railways or roads facilitating the transit of troops, buildings which are being used for billeting or training, factories producing munitions or other war material, offices or headquarters from which the enemy forces are being directed.

If it is asked on what *data* this hope or assumption is based, several replies are possible. It is, in the first place, the professed policy of the Government, as declared by the Foreign Office on May 18 of last year:

His Majesty's Government have made it clear that it is no part of their policy to bomb non-military objectives, no matter what the policy of the German Government may be. In spite of wanton and repeated attacks by the German Air Force on undefended towns in Poland, Norway, France, Holland and



Belgium, His Majesty's Government steadily adhere to this policy. Statements to the effect that the R.A.F. have deliberately bombed civilians or non-military objectives are completely untrue and are obviously designed to prepare the way for the extension to this country of the inhuman methods used by the Germans in other countries.

It is true that many things have happened since the declaration was made, but there is no reason to suppose that this general policy has been substantially modified. Our naval forces could easily outdistance enemy "frightfulness" in the treatment of German sailors, if it were so desired, and they have consistently refrained from sinking enemy merchant vessels at sight.

There are other considerations of a military or general nature which support the above contention. It is necessary, for example, to concentrate all our available resources on essentially military objectives, which offer themselves in great variety, rather than dissipate our strength on objectives of no military value purely for the sake of reprisals. Nor would such action have the desired effect, except on the assumption that the civil population of Germany will thereby be cowed into submission, or moved to cease bombing non-military objectives in this country. This is an assumption which is properly described as wishful thinking, and it appears to be far more likely that a wholesale bombing of their civilian population would have precisely the opposite effect.

#### IN CONCLUSION

It is, of course, evident that the whole problem is liable to be approached in a spirit of casuistical hair-splitting. It is suggested, for example, that a nation's spirit of resistance is, as a matter of fact, a military objective which may lawfully be attacked and reduced by bombing. But it is begging the question to say that the destruction of a nation's will to resistance is

a military objective, though it is undoubtedly the war aim or end of the opposing nation. What is or is not a military objective belongs to the notion of "means" to this end, and it is exactly the question at issue whether a direct attack on non-military objectives is a lawful means.

A question of greater consequence, as an exercise in casuistry, is that of the killing of non-combatants which follows indirectly upon an attack on a military objective, *e. g.*, a munition factory situated in a thickly populated area. The problem is made more difficult if the bombs are dropped from such a height that the possibility of their attaining some legitimate objective is correspondingly lessened. A proportionately grave cause, as well as a lawful intention, is always required to justify an action from which a bad effect follows, or is liable to follow, indirectly, and many will think that the probability of hitting a non-military objective so outweighs the probability of hitting a military objective that, in these circumstances, there cannot be a proportionately grave cause to justify the action.

It must be remembered, nevertheless, that remarkable accuracy is obtainable by the use of modern instruments, and it is said that the latest bomb-sights very considerably reduce the margin of error. I am quite prepared, at least, to accept the assurance of experts in aerial warfare that this is so. As for the gravity of the reasons which justify the wholly unavoidable destruction of non-military objectives by aerial bombing, on the occasion of attacking a military objective, there cannot be two opinions in this present war. When a nation is fighting for its right to exist against an implacable foe obsessed with a maniacal desire to dominate the world, and when the enemy has himself initiated this type of attack in reckless defiance of all the rules of warfare, everything must be permitted as a lawful reprisal unless it is manifestly for-

bidden by the moral law. Individual airmen acting under orders are entitled to work on this principle, and they may unloose their bombs on a known military objective at the height directed by those in command, taking whatever precautions are possible to insure that the target is reached.

The objection may be made that this argumentation is mere quibbling, and that it would be more honest to hold that, in modern warfare, the whole population of a country is a military objective. I cannot agree with this point of view. Any reasoning which preserves a principle intact is not dishonest quibbling but an honest attempt to adapt it to the pressing circumstances of the moment. It is perfectly easy to wax eloquent in condemning the bombing of Germany by the R.A.F.—one is sure, at least, of being on the safe side. But the safe solution of a moral problem is not always the correct one, and it is fair to ask those who do not agree with the above solution to suggest a satisfactory alternative. The most obvious weakness of the pacifist view that modern warfare is immoral lies in their complete inability to tell us convincingly what we ought to do when attacked by a totalitarian nation which rides roughshod over every law human and divine, disregards treaties, and stops at nothing whatever in order to attain its ends.

It does not by any means follow that there are no limits to what we may ourselves do as reprisals, and it is absolutely unlikely that our Government will authorize its armed forces to attack directly some objective which has no military significance solely in order to terrorize or kill enemy citizens. If this did happen it would be the clear duty of individuals in the armed forces to refuse. Nor is it true to say that, in modern warfare, there are no objectives without a military significance of some kind. Purely residential areas, villages and hamlets, municipal buildings and libraries, cathedrals and churches, hospitals and schools

are clearly non-military objectives. And amongst the persons who are not a legitimate object of direct attack are all children, as well as the men and women who are neither serving in the forces nor employed in manufacturing munitions of war, *e. g.*, doctors, nurses, lawyers, school teachers, agricultural workers—and, of course, professors of moral theology.

## **Birth Controllers and Their Victims**

WARD CLARKE

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**T**HERE is a strange notion prevalent to the effect that only those outside the Church are befuddled on the question of birth control—that a Catholic magazine is merely thumping the obvious to believers when it considers the problem in its pages. Yet we still hear Catholics grumble that they do not understand how the Church can hold “that birth control is murder.” If this is not befuddlement, then there is no such thing; for when did the Church ever hold such doctrine?

Now it is bad enough when all the various social, economic, medical, and pathological arguments of the professional birth-controllers have to be answered on their own grounds; but it is discouraging to come across Catholics who are puzzled by the Church’s stand because they cannot see how birth control can be murder. It is like arguing with an embezzler who thinks that the grand jury has indicted him for arson.

### IS BIRTH CONTROL MURDER?

There may be good reason, of course, why so many people entertain the misconception that the Church holds birth control to be murder; but there can be no logical reason why these people should sigh with relief when the murder charge is denied, as if thereupon no indictment remained at all. For an objectively grievous sin, perhaps far more serious than we presently realize, is committed in every instance of birth prevention. And by birth prevention is meant the limitation of offspring by voluntary interruption, the use of chemicals, or the employment of mechanical devices.

### AND SUPPOSE IT ISN'T MURDER

The sin may be even greater than we presently realize because in the morality of purity the law has been more slowly formulated than on any other point. For example, even in the Old Testament we find no mention of monogamy. Yet this is a part of the law, at least in its secondary requirements. Its prescription has existed as long as man has existed; but it became known and binding to man only as man developed in knowledge of himself and of his nature. This is not to say that the moral code is changing or artificial, made to conform to different times; but that it is a natural code which unfolds with the growth of man.

Thus, as we increase in wisdom through our senses and our intellects, we may learn more and more the enormity of this violation which strikes not only at the individual, not only at the Race, but at the very Mystical Body of Christ. For this evil not only wounds the Mystical Body, as does every sin, but by preventing new births it also retards the ultimate perfection which the Mystical Body achieves through the contributions of new members. And this, surely, is a serious matter.

The depth of evil inherent in birth prevention must be continually stressed. Too many people, learning that it is not murder, become convinced that while it is a sin, it is venial in matter, after the fashion of a "white lie." They argue that birth prevention and certain lies are alike frustrations of natural organs and differ only in kind—not in degree. This is a fatal error, for in addition to our knowledge of the fact that every sin against purity is grievous in matter, we have the express words of Pius XI condemning the practice of birth control as a serious violation of the moral law.

#### LET'S HELP THE WEAK

However, in stressing the enormity of this act, Catholic apologists are often prone to adopt a tone of censure which militates against the success of their endeavors to curb the evil. Their attitude is so openly harsh that many people who would otherwise be swayed by their arguments turn rebellious. There must be no *unco guid* raising of the hands, nor any fulminating tirade against those who have fallen under the influence of this temptation, because in most cases we are dealing with clouded, not malicious wills. The approach to the problem must be gentle. We must go along with Saint Bernard and excuse the intention, even if we cannot excuse what is done. We must attribute the act to ignorance, or to lack of deliberation, or to mistake. And even if the case is so clear that it cannot be excused we must say with the great saint, "The temptation was a violent one. What would it have done to me if it had taken possession of me with power so great?"

More people are moved by the thought that "marriage without children is a paradise without flowers" than are touched by the charge that birth control is a frustration of a natural organ and is therefore against the natural law.

### THE PROFESSIONALS ARE PUBLIC ENEMIES

We are speaking here, of course, not about those individuals who make a living out of propaganda for the prevention of life, but about those who have fallen under the spell of temptation, either economic or psychological. For those who try to raise this practice to a virtue there can be nothing but scorn, just as for those who are victims of this malice there should be nothing but charity.

Hence, let us, every now and then, answer the latest arguments of the professional birth-controllers. Error should always be searched out and stamped to death. But, for every one article on the evil of contraception, let us have ten on the beauty of conception. For every discourse on the evil of Divorce, let us have twenty on the sublimity of Marriage. For if, as Chesterton said, "many people talk about divorce without first taking the trouble to find out what Marriage is," we can be sure that many people who talk about birth control never really understood the meaning of birth.

### PURITY THE THING

A positive demonstration of the desirableness of purity should be the aim of all who engage in the fight against impurity. Strength must be pitted against weakness, reward against punishment. It is all very well to decry the falling birth rate, economic decay, race suicide, deterioration of public health, and all the rest, but a rising lament about general conditions can hardly persuade in individual cases. For, after the eternal sanctions, the worst evil of perverted love is not found in declining health, or in fewer babies. It manifests itself, tragically, in the gradual degradation of the individual character. And no character on the way to degradation is completely upset by the knowledge that vast hordes of his fellow-men are on the way with him.

And so, if we save not the individual, the problem grows more acute. This is only too true because with this gradual degradation there comes an insidious weakening of the will to live. Thus are lost not only the generations yet unborn, but also the one that is now alive.

## Providence and the War

LOUIS SEMPÉ, S.J.

*Reprinted from Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart.*

**A**FTER the war of 1914-1918 men hoped that war had killed war. The World War, they thought, would be the last war. The World War, alas! like all the others, was the last—until the next.

It is to be feared that it long will be thus. For war is the effect of human passions. As long as men continue to be greedy, proud, knavish, cruel, there will be peoples who will covet the wealth of other peoples, and who, to seize it, will allege a need for living-space. Always there will be the drama of the wolf and the lamb.

This does not mean that we must resignedly accept war as absolutely inevitable. On the contrary, we must do everything possible to prevent it, as we endeavor to prevent its sister calamities, pestilence and famine. But precaution is not presumption. There are objectives toward which we may strive to good advantage without flattering ourselves that we shall ever fully attain them.

Now that we have a war on our hands, men who ordinarily appear to worry very little about God cry out, scandalized: "How can God permit this?" It would be easy to reply to them: "Perhaps He would



not have permitted it, if you had joined with us in prayer to obtain God's grace." But, in truth, the matter of God's Providence in relation to war is otherwise complex and difficult. Without pretending to explain the whole mystery, I wish to show one or two aspects, which may clarify our notions and renew our confidence.

God, by giving to men the social instinct, thanks to which they group together and organize themselves little by little into nations, thereby gave to nations the means to provide for their needs.

Thus when a people, through the vicissitudes of centuries of the frequently chaotic past, has taken deep root in a land whose boundaries are set by nature or fashioned by the labor of the people themselves; when that people possesses its government, its language, its religion; above all, if it has shed its blood in defense of its liberty or for some noble cause; it has a right to manage its own affairs. It has the right, in justice and in peace, to live its life according to the national genius and to occupy an honorable place in the great family of civilized nations. But this right implies also the corresponding duty to fashion for itself its destiny, by adjusting itself to the natural conditions of its land, by use of the resources of its genius, by formation of necessary alliances. Of nations, as of individuals, we may say that God has left them in the hands of their own counsels. In other words, the nation, like the persons who grouped together form the nation, has its free will and also the duty to choose good rather than evil.

But, when a certain people threatens no one and asks only to be allowed to live at peace in justice, how can God tolerate its becoming the victim of the brigandage that is war of conquest, or even of unjust aggression? Can it be that Providence is indifferent to such criminal enterprises?

No. Certainly God is not indifferent to any injus-

tice. Sooner or later the unjust aggressor will be chastized. "Woe to thee that spoilest!" says the Lord. "Shalt not thou thyself also be spoiled?" (Is. xxxiii, 1). But God respects human liberty; it is the condition of merit, and also of demerit. What would man be without liberty? And where is the man who does not wish to enjoy liberty? But, since God gives us liberty, it is unfortunate that so many abuse it. We must endure its discomforts in order to enjoy its advantages. Liberty is retained or won at the cost of the action and the sacrifice necessary to safeguard or to regain it.

But look closer. When a people is the victim of an unjust aggression, should it not ordinarily look to itself to ascertain where the fault lies rather than to blame God? That people had the duty to safeguard itself against eventual attack, by building a strong armed force, by forming protective alliances. Has that people been negligent? If this be so, why should God be expected to supply what a people has neglected to provide for itself?

Again, God, in creating the family, imposed on the family the duty of multiplying life. "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. i, 28). If a people, ignoring the law of nature and the precept of the Creator, limits in its homes this life which it should multiply and spread; if by this extinction it allows its graves to outnumber its cradles; would it have the right to look for help from God against an adversary having twice its man-power?

God, the Creator of society as well as of individuals, has a right to homage from the State. It is the duty of the State to see to it that the doctrine of God is not excluded from the schools, His authority from its laws, His name from official pronouncements. If this public homage is refused, why should God intervene in behalf of a State which ignores Him?

Thus we see how shallow is the complaint so often heard: "How can God permit war?" God might an-

swer: "Why do you not prevent war yourselves by better observance of the moral law? And do you wish Me, by making up for your culpable negligence, to make Myself the abettor of your vices?"

Here in a general way is the view to be taken of God's Providence in regard to nations at war. The Providence of God is an immanently just Providence. The Creator gave to nations both political sense and the force of arms. It is for them to make use of God's gifts so as to protect, with all justice, their prosperity and their security.

The peoples of the earth have their destiny in their own hands. Good or bad, wise or foolish, they are responsible for their actions. Sooner or later they get what they prepare for.

Still, above this Providence of justice, God reserves another, still dearer to Him—the Providence of mercy. Therein is the expression of His Sacred Heart, and His love will be given to the nation that, in the depths of its distress, turns to Him in true repentance, humility, and confidence.

God is our Father. If, sooner or later, He leaves us to bear the burden of misery fashioned for ourselves by our own faults, it is not so much to satisfy His justice as to prepare us for His mercy, not so much to punish the culpable as to cure him. "I desire not the death of the wicked," says He, "but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ez. xxxiii, 11).

The Church, the sure interpreter of the will of God, gives us a particularly encouraging expression of this Providence of mercy. It is in her liturgy, in the *Mass in Time of War*:

In the first prayer, the Church pleads: "O God, Who dost stamp out wars and vanquish the assailants of them that hope in Thee, help us when we cry to Thee, that the ferocity of our enemies may be brought low, and we may praise Thee with incessant thanksgiving. Through our Lord . . ."

God, then, does not refuse to come to the aid of a people that invokes Him against an unjust aggressor. But He does wish us to acknowledge Him as the supreme arbiter of battles, Who vanquishes assailants and brings low the ferocity of enemies. He wills that, conscious of and repentant for our sins, we implore our salvation from His mercy.

To give us a concrete example of this merciful Providence, the Epistle tells how one day God harkened to the supplications of His people then threatened by a cruel invasion. "In those days all the captains of the warriors came near: and they said to Jeremias the prophet: Pray thou for us to the Lord thy God. And the word of the Lord came to Jeremias. And he called all the captains of the fighting men that were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest. And he said to them: Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, to Whom you sent me, to present your supplications before Him: If you will be quiet and remain in this land, I will build you up, and not pull you down: I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for now I am appeased for the evil that I have done to you. Fear not because of the king of Babylon, of whom you are greatly afraid: fear him not, saith the Lord: for I am with you, to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. And I will show mercies to you, and will take pity on you, and will cause you to dwell in your own land, saith the Lord almighty."

Thus does God defend the victim of unjust aggression, but on one condition: that is, that they ask it of Him humbly and that they observe His commandments.

Finally, in the Postcommunion, we learn the intention of God, which is amendment of our ways: "O God, Who hast dominion over all kingdoms and all kings, Who dost heal us by smiting and preserve us by pardoning, stretch forth Thy mercy toward us, that we may employ for the uses of correction the tran-

quillity and peace secured by Thy power. Through our Lord . . . ”

“That we may employ for the uses of correction the tranquillity and peace secured by Thy power”—that is to say, that we apply ourselves to flight from sin, to the worship of God, to respect and love for our neighbor. There, in the mind of our heavenly Father, is the end and purpose of peace. Alas, does not our sensual society, when it might enjoy true peace, do just the opposite? This must be acknowledged, when we recall with what frenzy, after 1918, so many plunged into lustful pleasures, into greedy scrambling for wealth, into insensate struggle for power?

Jesus wept because He could not exercise this Providence of mercy in favor of His earthly homeland, hard and stiff-necked in its wilful unbelief. “Jerusalem, Jerusalem,” He sighed on the eve of His Passion, “how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her children under her wings and thou wouldst not?” (Matt. xxiii, 37.) “If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side. And beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation” (Luke xix, 42-44).

Above all we must pray. To pray is to render homage to God; to pray is to shun sin; to pray is to acknowledge our weakness; to pray is to turn with confidence to God our Father in heaven. And pray to Mary, our Mother in heaven, that with her help we may touch the Sacred Heart of her Son, our Saviour.

To prayer join sacrifice. Our salvation was wrought in the terrible sufferings of our Lord's Passion. And note the ironic justice of events; society, rejecting the

mild penances prescribed by the Church, is constrained to accept the much harsher restrictions imposed by war-time taxation, black-outs, and all the rest. Then make a virtue of necessity; transform the privations that must be endured into expiatory sacrifices.

Prayer and sacrifice—offer them to God especially for our soldiers on active service. They are, doubtless, all that they should be—cheerful, ready to endure, heroic. Yet they are nonetheless subject to the sorrows of absence, of weariness, of wounds, and too often of death. It is for us to merit for them the grace to accept all as Christian soldiers. It is for us, if and when we can, to assist them to obtain this grace for themselves.

The soldier who, defending his country on the field of battle, risks death not for mere human beings, but for the brethren of Christ, performs an act of heroic charity which merits reward in heaven. If, besides this, he fights to defend Christian principles against the enemies of God and of the Church, which may well be the motive of many soldiers in this war, he is a crusader in the sight of God. His death will liken him to the martyrs. This is the doctrine of excellent theologians, notably of Saint Thomas Aquinas (2a, 2ae, q. 124, a. 5).

Pray, then, and have your children pray with you. Offer their innocent prayers with your own; offer their prayers as the flower of your own.

Prayer and sacrifice are less arduous when we have solid reasons for confidence. A reason for confidence is the moral issue in this war. Officially and for all the allied combatants this is a war of legitimate defense against two despotic powers who dream of dominating and of subjecting Europe. It was to wrest from them the Poland they invaded and partitioned and to stop their march on France and on England that the allies took up arms.

And, at least for the Christians among the allied

combatants, this war is more than that. It is nothing less than a struggle against two anti-religious powers: one of whom is sworn to spread Godlessness, to drown religion in a torrent of blood; the other aims to substitute German blood for the Blood of Christ and German racism for Catholicism.

Another reason for confidence is the reassertion, observed in France particularly, of spiritual forces. For generations the Church has not seen such universal veneration for the Pope, such sympathy for its doctrine, such respect for its rites. And, since we speak of war and military matters, how many soldiers, brought up without religion, or with only vague notions of religion, will find in the Masses offered by army chaplains, and in their instructions, the true religion of God the Father, of Christ the Redeemer, and of Mary our Mother?

Prayer, sacrifice, confidence! These were the arms that Pope Pius XI indicated for the reconstruction of the social order on the solid bases of peace and justice. May they gain for the world victory over Godlessness and racial paganism, so that reconstruction may be begun.

## What Can We Do for Peace?

STEPHEN J. BROWN, S.J.

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THE circumstances of the present moment might well make us think of peace as a mere idle word, or, at all events, as a dream that has been shattered forever. Surely it seems but a mockery to think of peace and to talk of it when all Europe is in the death-throes of the most terrible war in history.

And yet, as certainly as morning follows the night, an end must come to this gigantic struggle. I had almost written peace must follow war. But alas! that is

not so. For peace is something very different from the mere cessation of war and something far more vital and important. It is not a mere negative thing; it is a positive good. It is not merely the maintenance of any status quo nor the mere outcome of a state of things in which peoples would live side by side, each in its isolation without actual clash, but also without collaboration. Long ago the great Saint Augustine described peace as "the tranquillity of order," a definition which we may take to mean, in modern terms, "a state of society in which both individuals (of whatever class or type) and peoples share in the common good to an extent that permits them all to live a life in conformity with their natural lot and their destiny as Christians."

#### THE CATHOLIC IDEAL

This common good is an order of even-handed justice, in virtue of which the rights of individual man and the society of which he forms part are reciprocally guaranteed, an order, moreover, in which not only justice and fair play all round, but Christian charity has a dynamic role to play. The society which is truly at peace is one which has established within it an order of right and justice tempered by love. That, and nothing less than that, is the ideal at which every true Catholic must aim.

Now, at the end of this war, as at the end of all wars, there must be a settlement. Will that settlement be a peace or anything even remotely resembling peace in the true sense of the word? Some may think it is too soon to ask that question. But let us see.

For the disorder and the strife that is in the world today, in many parts of the world, there must be causes. The first step in seeking remedies to the disorders of society, as in seeking remedies to those of the body, is to diagnose those causes. Having done this, the next step is to study the remedies. Someone might object, what is the use of studying the remedies if you have



no chance of applying them? Whoever wins this war will not call upon us to suggest the remedies. My answer is twofold. In the first place, there are certain remedies which makers of treaties and after-war settlements are not competent to apply, and perhaps not willing. For the deep causes of disorder and strife are in the minds and souls of men, in false ideas, delusions, corruptions, passions. In the second place, you and I and others like us, however insignificant we may seem, are not mere isolated individuals; we are members of the great, age-old, and world-wide Catholic Church: we belong to a vast body of some three hundred and fifty millions of men united in faith and obedience to the central authority of Christendom—though, let us say it at once, they might be far more united than they are, and therefore far more powerful as an influence for peace. Even as it is, Catholics banded together and looking for guidance to Christ's Vicar on earth are the one stable, sane, and permanent influence for right. Well might the world look for leadership to the Church.

#### CAUSES OF DISORDER

We have said that some of the deepest causes of strife lie in the minds of men, and belong to the world of ideas. Doubtless there are economic causes of war, there are political causes, there are social causes. The gravity of these I do not wish to minimize. But I hold most strongly that such causes may be rendered relatively harmless, if men can be brought to tackle them with good will, with right ideas, and in a Christian frame of mind.

Now, in the world today we are faced not merely with false ideas, but with ideologies—that is to say, entire systems of ideas, coherent, logical, seeming to explain the world, and to suffice for life entirely outside of Christianity, and ultimately and necessarily hostile to Christianity, a *Weltanschauung*, or total out-

look on the world, which is the antithesis of Christianity. Two of these ideologies spring to the mind at once—the ideology known as Marxian Communism and that known as National Socialism. For the moment I leave aside Italian Fascism, which has much in common with the others, but is tempered by different elements. These ideologies are such as to render internal peace impossible in the countries of their origin and equally impossible peaceful relations with other States.

#### IGNORANCE OF SOME CATHOLICS

Yet vast numbers of Catholics are influenced and tinged, often unawares, by one or other of these ideologies. That, no doubt, is due to ignorance both of the real nature of these systems of thought and of the teaching of the Church. Ignorance, I have said, but is it an ignorance that excuses? In the masses, who have but little time or opportunity for learning the truth—perhaps. But in educated Catholics, and there are multitudes of them in this country of ours, who ignore the teachings and directions of the Holy See, who take their ideas exclusively from the secular press, or from some political party, or from propaganda heard on the radio—what excuse is there for these?

Note that I am not speaking of certain features, social, economic, and so forth, of life in the countries of origin of these ideologies, whether it be Russia, Germany, or Italy. These anybody who cares is free to admire. I am speaking of the entire system of thought and outlook on life, with their results in the world of realities. With these the Church's teaching authority has dealt in unmistakeable terms, based on full knowledge of the facts, on the one hand, and of the teachings of Christianity on the other. For Catholics there can be no two opinions about them.

#### VAST FIELD OF ACTION

Here, then, is a vast field of action to spread the truth about these fundamental foes of peace, and about

every other cause of unrest and strife. Let us, at least, instruct the minds and help to form the consciences of Catholics, even if our influence fails to penetrate beyond the pale of the Church.

Let me now state the aims and objects of Catholic Action, with a view to peace:

1. To create a Catholic public opinion, informed by the tradition and teaching of the Church, which shall be a real power for international justice and peace.

2. To enable Catholics to understand and to criticize from the standpoint of their religion the international organizations and movements of the day.

3. To establish contacts between Catholics at home and Catholics abroad.

4. To marshal and coordinate the knowledge and experience of all its members, so as to direct now on this, now on that, aspect of international morality the force of Catholicism at home and abroad.

Are these objects feasible? Well, public opinion is susceptible to influence, and in a free country such as ours it is possible to exert that influence. We have the press, the public platform, the radio, the stage, and the screen. Can we not use them?

#### ACTION PRESUPPOSES KNOWLEDGE

But a first condition of such action on public opinion is knowledge, information, in those who exercise it. If we are to teach and preach we must know.

This knowledge takes two forms—two forms that are a knowledge of principles and a knowledge of facts. First, we must have a firm grasp of those principles of natural law and Christian ethics that underlie all these things. That is vital, but is it very difficult? For us Catholics the learning of the fundamental principles has been enormously facilitated and that in a variety of ways.

There is, first, the authoritative teaching of the Holy See in the great Encyclicals from Leo XIII to Pius XII, covering such questions as international morality, war and peace, patriotism, nationalism, racialism, the mutual duties of citizen and State, the settling of international disputes.

Not everyone can hope to know everything. Some ought to specialize. I would, therefore, call attention to a few books in which Catholic principles and solutions on international questions are set forth.

1. *A Primer of War and Peace*. The Principles of International Morality. By Charles Platen. Kong, 1915.

2. *International Relations from a Catholic Standpoint*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

3. *The Foundations of International Order* (being the papers read at the International Conference at the Hague).

4. Five or six volumes of the *Semaine Internationale Catholique* of Geneva.

5. *The Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nations*. By John Eppstein.

6. The pronouncements of the Holy See on the subject of peace, especially in connection with the present conflict, have recently been brought together and published in a volume entitled, *The Pope Speaks*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Secondly, many of the best equipped minds among Catholics have long been preoccupied with the problems that arise out of international relations. Ours is but one of many groups and organizations which have been studying these things and reaching conclusions and setting forth laws and principles, while others have been engaged on the knotty problems involved in the application of these principles.

## APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES

The mistake that we Catholics sometimes make is to be content with principles without going any further. But principles have to be applied, and it is often precisely in the application that the real difficulties arise.

Suppose, for instance, that after study and discussion we reach a formulation of the principle of nationalities that is in harmony with justice and in line with Catholic teaching. So far so good. But the principle has to be applied to some concrete case. Before we can do so, we must ascertain certain facts, historical, geographical, ethnographic, social, religious, possibly linguistic and economic, before we can ever reach the conclusion that the principle applies to this case and that this given body of population has a right to self-government or to independence, as the case may be.

Any settlement of Europe must depend largely on facts—e. g., frontiers of language and nationality, natural boundaries, the will of the people, and so forth. And even the view we hold as regards certain questions and problems depends, or ought to depend upon our knowledge of the facts.

Now, the Catholic public, like the general public, is often very ill-informed about the facts. A striking example was the Spanish civil war. Our Irish public began by being uninformed about the facts: certain sections of it ended by being grossly misinformed. English public opinion, but not, as a rule, Catholic opinion in England, was even more sadly misled. Certain elements of the public here are very ill-informed, not to say misinformed, about the religious persecution in Germany, Austria, and Poland. Partisan propaganda is largely responsible for this and neglect of the Catholic press, which on these matters has sure sources of information.

I have said that Catholics can study, write, speak about Christian principles of order and peace. Need I add that they can also pray?

### THE FIELD OF STUDY

I suggest that it is useful and valuable work to study the causes of disorder and strife, the political, economic, social, religious causes; next, to consider what are the appropriate remedies; whether these are implicitly contained in Christian teaching, or expressly put forward by our guides, in particular the Popes, or whether they are suggested by human experience. You would thus be led to study the nature of international society as it arises out of the very nature of man as a social being; international law, or, at all events, the idea of international law; international organization, and, in particular, what form of it, for there must be something, is to succeed the League of Nations (for instance, shall it be some form of federal union?), you will study the question of international arbitration and international disarmament.

Fortunately your studies will not be journeys of discovery in an unknown territory. Others, many others, have been before you. You have only, in many cases, to follow in their footsteps, to discover for yourselves their principles, and then do your little part in helping to make them prevail for the guidance of this and future generations.

## Some Things New and Old

### SANCTA SOPHIA

**W**HERE can I find a life of Saint Sophia, patroness of the great church in Constantinople, asks a Sodality member.

Very sorry, but this inquirer will never find a life of that Saint Sophia, for the name is a barbarous and misleading rendition of the Greek title *Hagia Sophia*, which means the Church of the Holy Wisdom.

This magnificent temple, which was built during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (532-7) was one

of the most important of all the churches of Christendom, ranking only after the Lateran, which is the cathedral church of the Bishop of Rome, and the Vatican Basilica of Saint Peter. Sancta Sophia was the cathedral church of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and as such it remained until the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453. It was used as a Moslem mosque until recently, when the present Turkish government converted it into a national museum. There is a legend that the Holy Name, which appeared high up in the apsidal dome, continually shows through, in spite of the attempts of the Muslim to cover it with whitewash. Recent restorations, undertaken by American experts employed by the Turkish government, have revealed magnificent mosaics.

However, there *are* Saints in the Calendar of the Church whose names are Sophia. There is Saint Magdalen-Sophia Barat, Foundress of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, who was canonized by Pope Pius XI on June 24, 1925, and whose feast is observed on May 25. The Roman matron, Saint Sophia, who suffered for the Faith under the Emperor Hadrian in the second century, is celebrated September 30. Then on September 18 the Roman Martyrology commemorates Saints Sophia and Irene, virgins and martyrs. Last of all, there is celebrated on April 30, the Passion of Saint Sophia, who died for the Faith at Fermo, in Central Italy, during the persecution of the Emperor Decius in the third century.

But as to the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, so vast was it and its works that by a law of Heraclius, passed in the year 627, no fewer than 625 clerics were assigned to carry out the religious services of this glorious church.

#### SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Why are the Deadly Sins enumerated as seven? This is a question proposed to us by a student.

The Seven Deadly or Capital Sins are so called because they are the source from which all other sins flow. These sins are Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger, Sloth.

But as to the number seven, that classification is generally ascribed to Pope Saint Gregory the Great (590-604), and that category was maintained by the great theologians of the Middle Ages, and is universally held to this day.

However, Saint Gregory the Great was not the first theologian to classify the Capital Sins. Hermas the early Christian writer, who lived somewhere between the first and second centuries of the Christian era, classified the Capital Sins as twelve. But it was not until the monastic life began to flourish amongst the monks and hermits in the Egyptian desert that the classification of the Capital Sins began to take definite form.

Among the Eastern peoples seven was a mystical number, and the great writer Origen in his Homily on the Prophet Jeremias spoke of the seven nations of Chanaan as typifying the Seven Deadly Sins. Another hermit of Egypt, the monk Serapion, wrote about the eight Deadly Sins.

But it was from the time of Pope Gregory the Great that the classification of the Deadly Sins as seven in number, and as the source from which all other sins flow, became fixed, as Saint Gregory writes in his Commentary on the Book of Job.

Now Saint Gregory did not make this classification in a haphazard manner. He showed how the sins flow from one another. That the first of all the sins is pride, from which came covetousness, to be succeeded by lust; from that came envy, then gluttony, to be succeeded by anger, and last of all by sloth.